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BASIC OPENING PRINCIPLES
ILLUSTRATED IN A DUEL OF
GENERATIONS



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Introduction

I cannot hide that one of my favourite themes as a player, trainer and chess writer refers to the priorities regarding the development. Sometimes, I am a bit unsure whether this classical issue maintains its instructional character nowadays.

After all, the intensive use of computers ensure a minimum of playing accuracy, at least in the first part of the game (although it must be said that computers do not explain on general grounds why a move is good according to them!).

However, recent events involving a hard battle between generations, entirely justify the signal alarms I had drawn on that occasion.

As I have been constantly involved in the Italian chess life over the past years, I followed with certain interest the last national championship, held in December. As a spectator, I was fully rewarded by an episode involving some stunning numeric coincidence.

The hero of the early rounds doubtlessly was the Argentinean born grandmaster Carlos Garcia Palermo. Judging from his rating graph, Carlos obtained his main successes in the mid eighties, but, on the basis of our repeated encounters in Andorra, I can testify that he remained a tough opponent ten years later.

At the present, Carlos is just a couple of years away from his 60th

birthday, which did not prevent him from beating his first three opponents, whose age taken together results in a digit only a bit higher (63) than Carlos' age. One could expect that experience imposed itself in the final phase of the game, but the shocking truth is that the total amount of moves played in these games is similar, 62, giving us an average of less than 21 moves per game!!! In other words, none of the young opponents was able to get out of the opening properly, despite the fact of being (all of them) considered as some of the most promising young Italian players of the moment and being higher rated than the veteran anyway.

The details mentioned above, as well as the concrete analysis of the games led me to the conclusion that the opening priorities still remain topical in the computerized époque. Moreover, given the modern tendency of (sometimes blindly) embarking forced, concrete lines as soon as possible, the correct handling abstract concepts may offer a considerable advantage. This is what the aforementioned games strongly suggest; in the subsequent analysis, I will try revealing some of the typical mistakes that may be characteristic for the inexperienced players.

Of course, the games below do not illustrate the objective balance of

forces. As a matter of fact, Carlos' result in the last year championship was rather poor. This contrast actually gives us a hint that, when completely different methods of fight are used, spectacular and unexpected results may arise.

For didactic reasons, I have arranged the games in an order corresponding to the nature of the main mistakes. This resulted into a completely reversed order, which must be regarded just as another coincidence...

In the following game, played in the third round, Black prematurely displayed territorial ambitions in the centre, completely neglecting his queenside development. Abstractly speaking, this is the most elementary form of disobeying the classical precepts, which justifies my decision of starting precisely with this game.